

At-Tibyân Publications

# A Message To Every Youth

*By the martyred Imām,  
'Abdullāh 'Azzām*

*(may Allāh have Mercy upon him)*

دانشگاه

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*“...if you are too stingy with Allāh to give Him some of your time at such an early age, the coming times will prove you to be even stingier...”*

Verily,<sup>1</sup> all praise is due to Allāh. We praise Him, seek refuge with Him, and seek His Forgiveness. We seek refuge with Allāh from the evils of our souls, and the mistakes in our actions. Whoever Allāh Guides, there is none who can misguide him, and whoever Allāh misguides, there is none who can guide him. And I testify that there is none worthy of being worshipped except Allāh, and I testify that Muhammad (صلى الله عليه و سلم) is his servant and Messenger.

*{“O you who believe! Have taqwā of Allāh as He deserves, and do not die except as Muslims.”}*<sup>2</sup>

*{“O people! Have taqwā of your Lord, Who Created you from a single soul, and Created from it its mate, and sprouted from it many men and women. And have taqwā of Allāh, from Whom you demand your mutual rights, and do not cut off the relations of the womb. Verily, Allāh is Ever-Watching over you.”}*<sup>3</sup>

*{“O you who believe! Have taqwā of Allāh, and say that which is truthful. He will rectify your actions for you and Forgive you your sins, and whoever obeys Allāh and His Messenger has indeed achieved a great success.”}*<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> This book was translated from the collection of Shaykh ‘Abdullāh ‘Azzām’s transcribed lectures called ‘*at-Tarbiyah al-Jihādiyyah wal-Binā’*’ (4/141-154). All footnotes were added by the translator.

<sup>2</sup> *Āl ‘Imrān*; 102

<sup>3</sup> *an-Nisā’*; 1

<sup>4</sup> *al-Ahzāb*; 70-71

Verily, the most truthful of speech is the Speech of Allāh, and the best guidance is the guidance of Muhammad (صلى الله عليه و سلم). The worst of affairs are those that are newly introduced, and every newly introduced affair is an innovation, and every innovation is a misguidance, and every misguidance leads to the Fire.

As for what follows:<sup>5</sup>

The book '*al-Fawā'id*' is from the best of Ibn al-Qayyim's books. It was written as if he is a man who is eighty years of age, sitting and talking about his experiences in life. And they are, as he titled them, '*al-Fawā'id*' (points of benefit). Everything that Ibn al-Qayyim has written is from the best of what was written for Islām. In truth, Ibn al-Qayyim is a ripened fruit that sprouted from Ibn Taymiyyah. Ibn Taymiyyah is distinguished for his vast understanding and knowledge, and he spent a great part of his life as a *Mujāhid* between one battle and another. One time, he led a battle himself, when the rulers of Shām sat back from confronting the Tatars, and said: "We are unable to confront them." So, Ibn Taymiyyah said: "We will confront them," and Allāh gave them victory.

I say: Ibn Taymiyyah sprouted an inhuman, ripened fruit, and that fruit was Ibn al-Qayyim. Ibn al-Qayyim is distinguished with his depth of soul, and constant worship. One time, he passed through Makkah, and the people of Makkah were amazed at the amount of worship he would engage in, and his constant preoccupation with the remembrance of Allāh.<sup>6</sup>

From the books that he wrote are '*al-Fawā'id*,' and he also wrote books dealing with *tarbiyah*, such as '*Madārij as-Sālikīn Sharh Manāzil as-Sā'irīn ilā Rabb al-Ālamīn*,' and the book '*I'lām al-Muwaqqi'īn 'an Rabb al-Ālamīn*' - and it is a book combining the subjects of *Fiqh* and *Usūl* - as well as the book '*Zād al-Ma'ād fī Sīrat Khayr al-'Ibād*,' regarding his (صلى الله عليه و سلم) prayer, fasting, pilgrimage, battles,

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<sup>5</sup> This introduction of *Khutbat al-Hājah* was included by the translator, and is not part of the original text.

<sup>6</sup> For biographical information on Ibn al-Qayyim, see the following: Siddīq Hasan Khān's '*Abjad al-'Ulūm*' (3/138), Ibn Kathīr's '*al-Bidāyah wan-Nihāyah*' (14/234), ash-Shawkānī's '*al-Badr at-Tālī*' (2/143), Ibn Hajar's '*ad-Durar al-Kāminah*' (4/21-23), Ibn Rajab's '*Tabaqāt al-Hanābilah*' (2/447), Ibn 'Imād's '*Shadharāt adh-Dhahab*' (6/168), ad-Dāwūdī's '*Tabaqāt al-Mufasssīrīn*' (2/93), as well as Bakr Abū Zayd's '*Ibn al-Qayyim al-Jawziyyah: Hayātahu wa Athārahu*.'

medical practices, etc., as well the book '*ar-Rūh*,' and '*Badā'i' al-Fawā'id*,' and '*al-Jawāb al-Kāfi fī as-Su'āl 'an ad-Dawā' ash-Shāfi*.'<sup>7</sup>

Anyway, in his book '*al-Fawā'id*,'<sup>8</sup> he said:

“There are ten useless matters that cannot be benefited from:

- Knowledge that is not implemented
- An action that is empty of sincerity, and is not based on the correct example
- Wealth that is hoarded, as the owner neither enjoys it during this life, nor obtains any reward for it in the Hereafter
- The heart that is empty of love and longing for Allāh, and of seeking closeness to Him
- A body that does not obey and serve Allāh
- Loving Allāh without seeking His pleasure
- Time that is not spent in expiating sins or seizing opportunities to perform deeds of righteousness that will bring one closer to Allāh
- A mind that thinks about issues which bring about no benefit
- Serving those who neither bring you close to Allāh or benefit you in your life
- Hoping and fearing one who is under the authority of Allāh, and whose forehead is in His Hand, while he cannot bring any benefit, harm, life, death, or resurrection to himself.

However, the greatest of these matters is the wasting of the heart, and the wasting of time. Wasting the heart is done by preferring this worldly life over the Hereafter, and wasting time is done by having incessant hopes. All evil is in following one's desires and having incessant hopes, while all goodness is found in following the right path and preparing oneself to meet Allāh, and Allāh is the source of Assistance.”

Here, he summarized all evil in these two issues: wasting of the heart, and wasting of time. Wasting the heart is done by preferring this worldly life over the Hereafter, and wasting time is done by having incessant hopes, and incessant hopes and the following of one's desires are the ultimate manifestation of evil.

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<sup>7</sup> In reality, Ibn al-Qayyim has over thirty famous works that are still printed and read today.

<sup>8</sup> p. 161-162

The following of guidance and the preparation for the meeting with Allāh are the basis of all that is good:

*{“As for him who transgressed and preferred the life of this world, verily, his abode will be Hell-fire. And as for he who feared the standing before his Lord, and restrained himself from impure desires and lusts, verily, Paradise will be his abode.”}*<sup>9</sup>

Preferring the life of this world over the Hereafter corrupts the heart, and the one who fears will prepare the preparation that does not waste his time. These are the two manifestations of rectification: fearing the standing before the Lord, which results in the preparation for meeting Him, and not wasting one’s time. This brings life to the heart, as the hearts are given life by avoiding the desires and following the guidance.

*{“Verily, We have placed you as a successor on Earth. So, judge between men with truth, and do not follow your desire, for it will mislead you from the Path of Allāh.”}*<sup>10</sup>

Desires are the root of oppression, and they are the root of wastefulness, and they are the root of indecent sins, and they are the root of all evil, because the one who follows his desires has essentially pushed aside the guidance. So, our job is, as Allāh Said:

*{“And follow that which is revealed to you, and be patient until Allāh Judges, and He is the best of judges.”}*<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> *an-Nāzi’āt*; 37-41

<sup>10</sup> *Sād*; 26

<sup>11</sup> *Yūnus*; 109



The following of desires is from hastiness, and patience is to go against one's desires. The one who restrains his tongue is keeping his tongue patient from invading the privacy of other people. The one who restrains his eyesight is keeping his eyes patient from the inclination to look. The one who is patient from *zinā* is resisting the inclination that is pushing him to commit an indecent act. The one who breaks his fast in Ramadān is following the desires of his stomach, and patience is to resist this desire. The one who remains firm in the midst of a battle is resisting the desire to escape with his life. The one who remains patient in the prisons of the tyrants will be faced with the desire of the *dunyā* that is open for him outside of his prison cell. The one who is patient upon poverty is resisting the desire that is whispering to him to take wealth which is forbidden for him, or to work a job that is forbidden for him, in order to get money by any means. Because of this, the basis of all evil – as was said – is to have incessant hopes, resulting in the wasting of your time, while you do not know when your time will come, and when the caller of the Lord of the Worlds will say: 'Come, it is time to go to Allāh, the Mighty and Majestic.'

The Messenger of Allāh (صلى الله عليه و سلم) said:

**"Take advantage of five things before five other things: from your youth before your old age, your health before your sickness, your wealth before your poverty, your free time before you become occupied, and from your life before your death."**<sup>12</sup>

Take advantage of your youth, because you are today able to perform optional fasts, and tomorrow, when you are approaching old age, and you will need to nourish and feed your bones and flesh, you will not be able to withstand the pains of fasting. Right now, you are a youth who can get up and pray in the middle of the night, staying up in the bowings and prostrations that you can present to the Lord of the Worlds to bear witness for you, or to one day keep you company in the loneliness of your grave. Today, you are in the early years of your life, the years of your youth. The time of youth, O brothers, is the time of struggle. It is the time in which you are supposed to exert yourself and sacrifice! It is the time in which you are not tied down with many responsibilities, as you are alone, or have just a wife and child. Tomorrow, as the years pass, the responsibilities pile up, the problems of the world catch up to you, and you wish

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<sup>12</sup> Narrated by 'Abdullāh bin 'Abbās in the '*Mustadrak*' of al-Hākim (7927), and he declared it to be *sahīh* according to the conditions of al-Bukhārī and Muslim, and adh-Dhahabī agreed with him, as did al-Albānī (see his checking of '*Iqtidā' al-'Ilm al-'Amal*'; # 170)

to solve the problems of your family, children, and relatives – this will take much of your time.

So, now, you are in the stage of your youth, the stage of struggle and sacrifice. I would often remark that I am amazed at the youth who is afraid! What is there for him to be afraid of? And if he is afraid at this age, how will he be tomorrow? This period is the prime period of one's life. The youth is prepared to present his very soul for the Sake of Allāh, the Mighty and Majestic. Because of this, if we look to the people who first gave victory to the Religion of Allāh, we would find that they were all youths. In fact, most of them – three fourths, or four fifths of them – were less than twenty years of age, because this is the period of exertion and sacrifice.

In the '*Saḥīhayn*,'<sup>13</sup> 'Abd ar-Rahmān bin 'Awf narrated:

"I was standing in the ranks on the day of Badr. So, a young boy approached me – he was at the age of puberty, or recently past the age of puberty – and said: "O uncle! Where is Abū Jahl?" So, I said to him: "What do you want with him?" He is confused: this young boy is asking about Abū Jahl, the knight, the commander of *jāhiliyyah*. The boy replied: "I heard that he insults the Messenger of Allāh (صلى الله عليه وسلم). So, by Allāh, if I see him, my shadow will not leave his until I kill him, or he kills me."

Then, another young boy approached me, who was of the same age as the previous boy. He said to me: "O uncle! Where is Abū Jahl?" I asked him: "What do you want with him?" He replied: "We heard that he would insult the Messenger of Allāh (صلى الله عليه وسلم). By Allāh, if I see him, my shadow will not leave his until I kill him, or he kills me."

After a while, I spotted Abū Jahl from afar. So, I said: "This is your companion (i.e. the man you seek)," and I wished that I could be between the ribs of this youth – i.e. I wished that I could be in the chest of this youth, and that my heart could be like the heart of this youth: zealous and energetic, and looking forward to death. So, they dashed towards him. Shortly after, they returned, saying: "O Messenger of Allāh! We killed him!" The Messenger of Allāh (صلى الله عليه وسلم)

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<sup>13</sup> al-Bukhārī (3988), Muslim (1752), al-Hākim (3/425), at-Tabarī, in his '*Tārīkh*' (2/454), and al-Bayhaqī, in '*Dalā'il an-Nubuwwah*' (3/83)

asked: **“Which one of you killed him?”** Mu’ādh bin ‘Amr bin al-Jamū<sup>14</sup> said: “I did,” and Mu’ādh bin ‘Afrā’<sup>15</sup> said: “I did.” He (صلى الله عليه وسلم) then asked them: **“Have you wiped your swords clean yet?”** They said: “No.” He (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said: **“Show them to me.”** So, he (صلى الله عليه وسلم) found blood on both swords, and said to them: **“You both killed him.”**<sup>16</sup>

‘Abdullāh bin Mas’ūd then searched through the corpses, found Abū Jahl breathing his last breath, and sat on his chest. Abū Jahl opened his eyes to see Ibn Mas’ūd on his chest, and said, in a degrading fashion: “Were you not one of our shepherds in Makkah?” Ibn Mas’ūd said: “I certainly was, O enemy of Allāh.” Abū Jahl then said: “You have put yourself in a difficult position, you camel shepherd. You sit on my chest? Nobody has ever sat themselves down on such an honorable thing.” Ibn Mas’ūd then said: “Whose day is it today? Who is the victorious one? Allāh and His Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم).”<sup>17</sup> Of course, there are other narrations, whose authenticity cannot be confirmed, that he said: “Inform Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم) that I will remain his enemy until my last breath.” There is also a narration that when ‘Abdullāh bin Mas’ūd was in Makkah, Abū Jahl hit him, injuring his ear. So, when Ibn Mas’ūd was sitting on the chest of Abū Jahl, he cut off his head. It was narrated that he then pierced a hole in Abū Jahl’s ear, tied a rope through it, and dragged his head by this rope. It seems that Abū Jahl’s head was quite large, and Ibn Mas’ūd was a frail, weak person. So, when the Messenger of Allāh (صلى الله عليه وسلم) saw Abū Jahl’s severed head, he fell into prostration out of gratitude to Allāh, and said: **“By the One besides Whom there is none worthy of worship, there is a Fir’awn for every ummah,**

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<sup>14</sup> He is Mu’ādh bin ‘Amr bin al-Jamū’ al-Ansārī al-Khazrajī as-Salamī. He witnessed *Bay’at al-‘Aqabah*, as well as Badr. He died during the reign of ‘Uthmān. (see Ibn Hajar’s *‘al-Isābah fī Tamyiz as-Sahābah’*; 3/429)

<sup>15</sup> ‘Abd ar-Rahmān bin ‘Awf said that Mu’ādh bin ‘Afrā’ was not given the spoils of Abū Jahl because he was himself killed later that day. (see *‘Mishkāt al-Masābih’*; 2/352)

<sup>16</sup> **Mu’ādh bin ‘Amr bin al-Jamū’ narrated:** “I made Abū Jahl my target on the day of Badr. So, when he was finally in my sights, I went for him and struck him, cutting through the middle of his thigh. Suddenly, his son ‘Ikrimah sliced through my shoulder with his sword, leaving my arm hanging from my body by a piece of skin. This left me hindered from fighting for the rest of the day, as I had to drag my arm behind me! Finally, when I could take it no more, I put my foot down on my arm and jerked my body back until my arm came off.” (see adh-Dhahabī’s *‘Siyar A’lām an-Nubalā’*; 1/250-251)

<sup>17</sup> Narrated by Anas, and reported by al-Bukhārī (3963), Muslim (1800), Abū Dāwūd (2709), Ahmad (3/115, 129, 236), and al-Bayhaqī, in *‘ad-Dalā’il’* (3/86-87)

**and this is the Fir'awn of this Ummah."**<sup>18</sup> This is the narration in the '*Sahīhayn*,' and it is also said that the Messenger of Allāh (صلى الله عليه وسلم), after he saw the rope tied through the hole in Abū Jahl's ear, remembered the day that he had injured Ibn Mas'ūd's ear in Makkah, and then said to Ibn Mas'ūd: **"An ear for an ear, and the head is extra."**<sup>19</sup>

I say: this is Abū Jahl, whose existence the people were relieved of by two young boys in the early part of their lives. They were around seventeen years of age, which would put them in high school! Each one of them faced and killed the elite knight of Quraysh, Abū Jahl, giving the Messenger of Allāh (صلى الله عليه وسلم) the glad tidings of having finally gotten rid of him. And if you look to the battles of Badr, the Trench, Mu'tah, etc., you would not find except youths.

In the two World Wars, Britain and the other powerful nations used to depend on the youth who were seventeen, eighteen, and nineteen years of age for the carrying out of the most dangerous operations, because they were prepared to do anything, and they do not stand for a long time to think. The Chinese would train their suicide fighters, and advise them to depend on people of such age to carry out their operations, saying: "The operations that require putting one's self in great danger should not be carried out by those who are older in age, as they might delay the entire operation, because they will stand and think to themselves: 'What will the outcome be? What is the benefit in this?'" So, such philosophy and rationale will prevent them from exerting themselves and sacrificing, and movements and calls are not given victory in their early stages by those who stand and think too much. Rather, they are given victory by the people with emotion and heart.<sup>20</sup> So, the heat of emotion and the incitement of the heart are what result in sacrifice. As for so-called rational thinking, this is what says to the person: 'Do not exert yourself, and do not sacrifice.' The mind is generally cold and stagnant, and does not incline towards sacrifice. It inclines

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<sup>18</sup> Reported by al-Haythamī, in '*Majma' az-Zawā'id*' (6/79), and he said: "Reported by at-Tabarānī, and its men are the men of the '*Sahīh*,' except for Muhammad bin Wahb bin Abī Karīmah, and he is trustworthy." So, it is *hasan*, and Allāh Knows best. It was also reported by at-Tabarānī (8468-8476), and al-Bayhaqī, in '*ad-Dalā'il*' (2/261-262), and al-Bukhārī (3961) and Abū Dāwūd (2772) both reported a shorter version of this.

<sup>19</sup> For the entire story of the killing of Abū Jahl, see '*Fath al-Bārī*' (7/342-354), and '*Sharh Sahīh Muslim*' (12/159-160).

<sup>20</sup> This is true in the case that the action in question is established to be correct according the *Sharī'ah*, not when one uses emotion and zeal as a trigger for acts that oppose the *Sharī'ah*.

towards contemplation. So, if one's emotion says to him: 'Exert yourself. Allāh will compensate you,' the mind then says: 'Do not reduce your wealth.' If the emotion says: 'Sacrifice yourself,' the mind says to him: 'If you remain, you will be of greater benefit to Islām,' and so on.

Because of this, you would find that with the thinkers and philosophers, their words are in the sky, while their actual lives are stagnant at the foot of a mountain. There is a huge difference between what they call to and the reality that they live. So, we must pay special attention to the years of one's youth. Anas bin Mālik said: "The Messenger of Allāh (صلى الله عليه وسلم) came to Madīnah with his Companions, and there was not a single man with white hair in his head except for Abū Bakr, who had dyes his beard with henna and saffron."<sup>21</sup> Not a single person had a white hair on his head except for Abū Bakr, and Abū Bakr was 51 at the time, and 'Umar was 41, and this was after the Prophethood by thirteen years. As for when the Messenger of Allāh (صلى الله عليه وسلم) was first sent forth and the people believed in him, Abū Bakr was 38, and all of those who had accepted Islām were between 15 and 25, in addition to those who were children.

Allāh – the Mighty and Majestic – will ask a specific question to the youth on the Day of Resurrection: **"The two feet of a servant will not move from their places until he is asked about four things: about his life and what he did with it, about his youth and how he spent it, about how well he acted upon his knowledge, and about his earnings - where he obtained it, and what he spent it on."**<sup>22</sup>

Allāh – the Mighty and Majestic – will ask about his life. Then, He will ask the second question, which is in regards to his youth, despite the fact that the period of youth is itself part of the life that he was just asked about! Regardless, Allāh has singled out the period of youth for questioning:

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<sup>21</sup> al-Bukhārī (3919 & 3920); see *'Fath al-Bārī'* (7/302-303)

<sup>22</sup> at-Tirmidhī (2417), and al-Albānī declared it *sahīh* in *'Sahīh at-Targhīb wat-Tarhīb'* (1/126) and *'as-Silsilah as-Sahīhah'* (946)

***{“Allāh is He Who created you in a state of weakness, then gave you strength after weakness, then, after strength, gave you weakness and grey hair. He Creates what He Wills, and He is the All-Knowing, the All-Powerful.”}***<sup>23</sup>

Of course, you are at an age in which Satan will enter upon you by way of your studies, and by way of your incessant hopes. If it is said to you to call to Allāh – the Mighty and Majestic – or to give some of your time for Allāh, Satan enters upon you, saying: ‘Right now, you are still in school. Tomorrow, when you get your degree - your weapon in the society – you can work for Allāh.’

First of all, you do not know when you will graduate, and you do not know when you will die, and you do not know how you will meet your Lord. So, beware of having these incessant hopes.

Secondly, if you are too stingy with Allāh to give Him some of your time at such an early age, the coming times will prove you to be even stingier. What a difference there is between those who are infused with Islām at an early age, and those who get old and enter into Islām at an old age. What a difference! This is because to be nurtured upon Islām from a young age is much easier. Islām becomes a part of your life if you are young, and your limbs, soul, and life are transformed into a part of Islām. In fact, you are transformed into a part of the body of Islām, just like the small tree and the large tree: the large tree has an established trunk and dried up bark, making it hard to change the direction in which its branches are pointed. The small tree, on the other hand, can be moved in whatever direction you wish, as it is still able to be manipulated by your hands. Because of this, the Lord of the Worlds will shade this youth who was raised in the obedience to Allāh on the day in which there will be no other shade: **“There are seven whom Allāh will shade beneath the shade of His Throne on the day in which there will be no shade but His shade...(including) a youth who was raised upon the obedience to Allāh.”**<sup>24</sup>

In truth, I have noticed that those who enter into the *Da’wah* at a young age are much different than those who do so at an old age. The Islāmic *Da’wah*, when a student enters it from his early years in school, and lives within its fold until the end of his life, such a person becomes infused with it, and he becomes an inseparable part of Islām.

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<sup>23</sup> *ar-Rūm*; 54

<sup>24</sup> Part of a longer *hadīth* reported by al-Bukhārī (1423) and Muslim (1031)

As for the older person, with his social positions, affluence, children, etc. – especially if the world comes crashing down on his head – and he decides to repent, he seeks to enter into Islām with conditions. So, if he was a minister, he demands to be respected, and to enter into Islām living at the same level in the society that he was living beforehand. So, it is impossible for him to become fully infused with it. He enters into Islām with many *jāhilī* customs, including the love of this world, and the love of being praised. He wants the people to respect him. It is not easy for him to sit with the proper manners and learn this religion as it was revealed by Allāh. Additionally, there are many roots that have been implanted in the customs of *jāhiliyyah* that surrounded his life. For example, here is his wife who is now used to dancing at parties, and this is his daughter who is now used to walking with boys, and this is his relative who is now used to getting drunk in his presence, and this is his other daughter who is now used to shaking hands with arriving male guests, and this is his sister who is now used to welcoming these guests, sitting in front of them with one leg on the other, and drinking tea and coffee with them. All of this must be changed. If he wishes to live a truly Islāmic lifestyle, he will come across extreme hardship in attempting to infuse the life described above to be in accordance with the *Dīn*.

This is different from if he had been young when entering into the Islāmic *Da'wah*, knew Islām, had long been engaged in this battle with his household, and had not married except a true Muslim girl, since he is a Muslim, and seeks Islām as the primary condition for marriage. As for the one who has lived much of his life without the Islāmic lifestyle, he is the one searching for a girl of affluence, the daughter of this prince, the daughter of that minister, the daughter of this wealthy person – this is because he is getting married simply to climb up the social ladder on his wife's back. He wishes to be mentioned when she or her family is mentioned, or to be able to attend a gathering and say: 'I am now related to this minister, I am now a part of this family.' Because of this, if he then wishes to push all of this away and return to the crucible of Islām, he will find great hardship. What will he do with his company that was established with *ribā*? What will he do with the land he owns that was purchased with bank loans? What will he do with his worldly-oriented friends who control the land? What will he do with all of this? He will cut himself off from all of this; he will cut himself off from his friends, he will cut himself off from his companions, he will stop having the night parties and dances – all of this will end. It is not easy for a man to simply kick all of this to the side with his foot and return to Allāh.

The period of one's youth is from the most important periods of one's life. Believe me, brothers: I have seen some of those who were guided by Allāh to

being acquainted with regular prayer and paying *Zakāh* at an old age, and one of them said to me: "I feel as if I am a hypocrite, because I cannot operate my company except by dealing in *ribā*, as the monthly requirements on my part exceed hundreds of thousands. When I get up to pray, I feel inner pain, and I am unable to rid myself of it. At the same time, I wish to turn towards Allāh." So, there is great hardship associated with the return to Allāh – the Mighty and Majestic – at this old age.

I remember that we used to arrange a gathering in 'Ammān which was attended by those with high social positions, company owners, the elite, etc. So, one of the attendees asked me: "What do you think about a man who has never fasted in his life, and is 40 or 50 years old?" So, I said to him: "There is a *fatwā* from the Hanafīs that the expiation for one deed of a certain type expiates for all of that deed that one has missed. So, if one fasts for two consecutive months, this will expiate for him all of the fasting that he owes." One of the other attendees -who was in his forties, and had never prayed nor fasted in his life - liked this *fatwā* very much, and decided to repent to Allāh. So, I gave this lesson, and lost contact with them for some time.

Afterwards, I visited the house in which I had given this lesson, and I was startled to find the man who had asked the original question sitting in the house, and said to me: "Don't you know?" I asked him: "Know what?" He said: "For some time now, such-and-such famous person heard the *fatwā* you had mentioned, and the next day, he began to pray and fast, and he was a businessman. He would fast in the middle of July, and his family became worried at his situation, because he began fasting. So, they went to ask another scholar, and he said: "If he has repented, he should fast as much as he is able."" I replied: "No, I did not know about this."

This man who repented later said to me: "The people would come to me in the midst of the heat that month. I mean, in these three or four days in July, 'Ammān never witnessed heat like this," and he was a businessman who owned three shops: one in Mt. 'Ammān, one in Mt. Husayn, and one in Mt. al-Wubaydah. He continued: "So, the people would come to me to take water from my refrigerator while I was fasting. All throughout the day, my saliva would drip inside my mouth as if it were *sūs*," and *sūs* (licorice) is a beverage we use to quench the thirst, because it does so very quickly. Indeed, it is his fasting! He is now serious about the affairs of his religion! In the women's clothing stores that he owned, the women would come to try on the clothes. They would try on outer garments, under garments, etc. So, he felt that this type of work was not in accordance with



his new Islāmic lifestyle. So, he insisted upon quickly putting an end to his businesses. He purified his three shops, and came to me with a huge amount of these clothes, saying to me: "Here. Give these away to the poor." He wished for nothing more than to end this business that was attracting women, and he transformed his business to that of selling carpets. He said: "Carpet stores do not attract women."

After a while, I asked him: "How do you find yourself at this point?" He replied: "I used to sell between two and three thousand Jordanian *dinārs*' worth of merchandise per day, which equals about six to seven thousand American dollars," and of course, about a half or third of this was profit. "However, I never felt that I was really wealthy. Now, I sell one tenth of this amount, and I feel that my pockets are filled with wealth. I feel blessed."

I gave this example to clarify for you the fact that repentance at an old age is a difficult and tiring task to undertake. This very individual, after he took care of his fasting, he turned towards his business. After he purified his business, he moved on to his household to carry out a revolution in rectifying it. His wife would not wear long clothing, and his daughter would not wear long clothing – they were living the modern life in 'Ammān, and he had lived much of his life in Germany. Eventually, problems erupted between he and his wife, and he was able to overcome her and put forth some choices: either a life with me and Islām, or you leave me and return to your parents' home. As I said to you, this person was insistent, and this insistence was done stubbornly. However, this attempt at change cost him dearly.

As for you, all of your affairs are in your hands. You can choose your wife, your path in life, and your job that is in accordance with the *Shari'ah* of Allāh and Pleases your Lord. So, from now, establish your connections in life based on Islām. If you do so, you will not face any problems in the future. So, when you take advantage of the opportunity of your youth, you will relax tomorrow in your time of old age. As your age progresses, it will become more difficult for you to learn Islām, and it will become more difficult for you to implement the religion of Islām. Because of this, 'Umar would say: "Learn, before you are given positions in life." 'Abd al-Malik bin Marwān was considered to be from the boldest of the scholars of Madīnah: he knew *Fiqh*, *Hadīth*, and Arabic. 'Āmir ash-Sha'bī, who was known for his knowledge of *Fiqh* and *Hadīth*, was unable to compete with 'Abd al-Malik bin Marwān, despite the fact that he was also from the memorizers of the Qur'ān, *Hadīth*, and was a master of the Arabic language. When Marwān died, the news came that it was now time for ash-Sha'bī to take

over the position of leadership. So, ash-Sha'bī held the *Mushaf*, and said to it: "Farewell!" He tearfully and intensely bid the *Mushaf* farewell, for he knew that leadership and the problems that came with it would preoccupy him from studying, reciting, and memorizing.

So, my brothers:

You are now in the prime of your lives! This is the period of exertion, and this is the period of worship, and this is the period of *Da'wah*, and this is the period of movement and activity! So, it is upon you to turn towards Islām, learn it, implement it, and call to it. Knowledge, action, and propagation! If this chance passes you, it is a golden opportunity that can never be repeated. How plentiful is the free time during the university days, and how wonderful are the university days for turning towards Allāh, and how wonderful are the university days for worship, and how wonderful are the university days for *Da'wah* to your colleagues and friends, those you know and do not know!

*{“So, remind them, as you are only a one who reminds. You are not a dictator over them.”}*<sup>25</sup>

**“Take advantage of five things before five other things: from your youth before your old age, your health before your sickness...”**

Today, you are able to stand up during the prayer, and tomorrow, you will not be able to pray except while sitting. Today, you are able to fast, and tomorrow, you will get sick and will not be able to fast. Such is the health for which Allāh requires from you some charity. The tax of the health, or the charity of the health, is worship, which purifies the body, purifies the limbs, and preserves them from destruction. The more it gives, the more the benefit increases, and the health does not decline with the increase in worship. Rather, it increases and is perfected:

*{“...Ask forgiveness of your Lord, and then repent to Him. He will send upon you abundant rain, and add strength to your strength...”}*<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> *al-Ghāshiyah*; 21-22

<sup>26</sup> *Hūd*; 52

So, strength increases with repentance and obedience of Allāh, the Glorified. This is natural, since worship relaxes the body and nerves, and this further builds the body.

One Afghani said to me that his father is 120 years old, and not a single one of his teeth have fallen out to this day! He prays the five daily prayers in the mosque, especially the *Fajr* and '*Ishā'*'. Such preservation of the body in this manner can only be the result of the preservation of Allāh<sup>27</sup>: **"...be mindful of Allah, and He will take care of you..."**<sup>28</sup> So, worship is what preserves the body, and as long as the connection with Allāh is good, it will preserve the body: **"...be mindful of Allah, and He will take care of you..."**

**"Take advantage of five things before five other things: from your youth before your old age, your health before your sickness, and your wealth before your poverty..."** because, as 'Alī bin Abī Tālib said: "I am amazed at the stingy person who runs from the wealth that he sought out, and seeks the poverty that he has run from." He lives the life of a poor person in this world, and he will be taken to account in the next life as a wealthy person. He hoards this wealth to that he would buy his sons alcohol with it, or cars, or to make it easy for them to chase after girls, and he will eventually be crushed under the iron hammer of Munkar and Nakīr, and the Angels of punishment in his grave. And the Angels that follow Mālik in Hell will take him to account for every bit of wealth that he ever owned!

There is a story that, while being merely symbolic, is deeply affecting. The story is that a wealthy person died, and his children said: "We wish for a man to keep our father company in his grave for just one night." So, they dug two holes, and connected each with the other. In one of the holes, they put their father, and they

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<sup>27</sup> **Ibn Rajab al-Hambalī said:** "Whoever is mindful of Allāh when he is young and strong, Allāh will take care of him when he is old and has become weak, and will bless him with good hearing, eyesight, strength, and intellect. One of the scholars who lived beyond the age of one hundred years and enjoyed good strength and reasoning jumped up in a lively manner one day, and was asked about that. He said: "I kept these physical faculties from sin when I was young, and Allāh has preserved them for me now that I am old." The opposite also applies. One of the *Salaf* saw an old man begging from people, and said: "This is a weak man who ignored Allah when he was young. So, Allāh is ignoring him now that he has grown old."" (*Jāmi' al-'Ulūm wal-Hikam'*; 1/186)

<sup>28</sup> Part of a longer *hadīth* narrated by Ibn 'Abbās, and reported by at-Tirmidhī (2516), and al-Albānī declared it *sahīh* in '*Dhilāl al-Jannah*' (316-318), as well as his checking of '*Mishkāṭ al-Masābīh*' (5302)

left the other hole empty. They then searched for someone who would be brave enough to lay himself next to his corpse. So, they eventually found a servant, and said to him: "We will give you a thousand *dinārs* if you spend one night next to our father." He replied: "I will take the money, and if I die, my children can live off of it. If I live, I will start a business with it." The Angels of punishment then descended, saying: "These are two people. One of them is alive, and the other is dead. One is spending one night here, and the other is with us for good. Since this person is leaving tomorrow, let us begin by questioning him." So, they asked him: "Who are you?"

He replied: "My name is such-and-such."

"What do you do for a living?"

"I am a servant who carries things for people."

"You carry things for people? What do you use to carry these things?"

"I use a rope made of fiber."

"Were you sure that this fiber was pure, and was not *najas*? And how did you earn the ten shillings with which you purchased the rope?"

"I worked for such-and-such a person."

"Were you sure that his wealth was acquired by permissible means, and not by forbidden means?"

Anyway, they continued questioning him about the rope and his work from sunset to the next morning, after which he exited the grave. So, the children of the dead man came to him, asking about what had happened. He replied: "Your father will not cease to be punished until the Day of Resurrection." They asked him: "Why?" He replied: "Because I did own except this single piece of rope that I carry things with, and the Angels spent the entire night asking me about it, where I got it, where I went with it, etc. So, how would it be for your father, who owned all of these gardens, palaces, and buildings? When would they finish taking him to account?"

In truth, this is simply a symbolic story. However, it carries deep meaning and cause for reflection.

Being taken to account is intense. Being taken to account by Allāh is intense. The issue is not light. So, prepare your proper provisions from now, and make yourself ready for the accounting with your Lord, and know that tomorrow, you will be standing between the Hands of Allāh, and will be questioned about every one of your actions:

*{“...And those who do wrong will come to know by what overturning they will be overturned.”}*<sup>29</sup>

So, my brothers:

How many times have I said to you that you are now in the prime of your lives, and that you must turn towards Islām with knowledge, action, and propagation! It is easy for you to learn, to act, and to teach. If you do not do this within this period, you have let an opportunity pass you by that will never show itself again. Free time is not replaceable! You might never again experience a period in which you have this amount of free time, so, take advantage of it! Beware of having incessant hopes and following your desires! Incessant hopes waste your time, and following your desires corrupts your heart, and I advise you to read the Noble Qur’ān every day! I advise you to read at least half of a *juz’*, so that you would complete the entire Qur’ān every two months, at least.

I also advise you to be constant with the remembrances and supplications of the morning and evening. Recite them after the *Fajr* prayer, and attend the *Fajr* and ‘*Ishā’* prayers in the mosque: **“He who prays ‘*Ishā’* in congregation is as if he has prayed for half the night, and he who prays the *Fajr* in congregation is as if he has prayed all night.”**<sup>30</sup> Also, there is the *hadīth* reported by at-Tirmidhī: **“Whoever prays the morning prayer in congregation, then sits remembering Allāh until sunrise, then prays two units of *Duhā* prayer, has a complete reward of *Hajj* and ‘*Umrah*, has a complete reward of *Hajj* and ‘*Umrah*, has a complete reward of *Hajj* and ‘*Umrah*.”**<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> *ash-Shu‘arā’*; 227

<sup>30</sup> Muslim (656) and at-Tirmidhī (221)

<sup>31</sup> at-Tirmidhī (586), and al-Albānī declared it *hasan* in ‘*at-Ta’līq ar-Raghīb*’ (1/164-165)

So, pray the *Fajr* in the mosque, recite some Qur'ān afterwards, seek Allāh's Forgiveness until the Sun rises, pray two units of *Duhā* prayer, then go to your university. Prepare your class notes for school day by day, and do not put any of this off. Beware of having incessant hopes, resulting in your time being lost. Prepare everything day by day. You will be asked about every second of your life, as on the Day of Resurrection, every breath that you took will tear itself apart out of sorrow and regret. So, *Fajr* prayer, Qur'ān recitation, *istighfār*, congregational prayers, fasting two days of every week, having good, righteous friends at school – look for the good, sincere friends who will help you to fulfill the *Da'wah* of Allāh, Islām<sup>32</sup>: **"...for Allāh to guide one man through you is better for you than the best type of camels,"**<sup>33</sup> and you are responsible in front of Allāh for relaying His Religion, as Allāh has made you a Muslim, and has made you from the best nation brought forth for mankind, because:

*"...you enjoin the good, forbid the evil, and believe in Allāh..."*<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> **Ibn Jamā'ah said:** "The student of knowledge should not mix except with either those he can benefit, or can benefit from. And if he is offered the friendship of one who will waste his time with him, will not benefit him, will not benefit from him, and will not assist him in reaching his objective, he should politely end the relationship from the start before it progresses to something deeper, as when something becomes established, it becomes more difficult to change it. There is a phrase that is constantly on the tongues of the *Fuqahā'*: 'Repelling something is easier than removing it.' So, if he requires someone to befriend, let that person be righteous, religious, pious, wary, intelligent, full of benefit, having little evil, good at complying, rarely conflicting, reminding him if he forgets, cooperating with him when he is reminded, helpful if he is in need, and comforting if he is in distress." (see '*Tadhkirat as-Sāmi' wal-Mutakallim*'; p. 83)

<sup>33</sup> al-Bukhārī (4210)

<sup>34</sup> *Āl 'Imrān*; 110

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